SCRIPT BITS!
Issue: Sonic the Hedgehog #170 (DEC'06)
Lead Story Pages:
Back-up Story Pages: n/a

Welcome one and all to **Script Bits!** This monthly feature will take roughly forty-five percent of a story in Archie Comic's *Sonic the Hedgehog* and present it to you as insight into the writing process.

Part of the fun of this feature will be comparing what was written and what saw print. Sometimes the vision is tweaked as the artists interpret the script. Sometimes the original idea doesn't work once put on paper and must be adjusted from there. Sometimes the artist has a stroke of genius and does something different than what the script calls for - and it's for the better!

So pull out your copy of *Sonic the Hedgehog* #170 from December of 2006 and get ready to read along!

Table of Contents

Remembering "Comings and Goings" p. 1
Lead story Easter Eggs p. 2
Lead story script selections p. 2

Remembering "Comings and Goings"

There was much to do when "Comings and Goings" was on my plate. We had just finished a huge block-buster story, there were still loose ends to tie up, and previous ideas to somehow work into the narrative. It was a whirl-wind of material that ultimately we squeezed into one issue.

Originally pitched as "Lives that Come and Go," this issue was meant to be a moment for long-time readers to catch their breaths and new readers to hop on. As the original title implies, part of the focus would be on the recent rash of casualties and at the lives and/or livelihoods restored.

Chief among those would be good ol' King Acorn. Well, Former-King Acorn. Maximillian. Max. Anyway, the guy had been through the wringer: brain-washed, crystallized, possessed, paralyzed from blunt trauma to the back of the head, poisoned – he ought to be dead. But there'd been enough death at this point and I had plans for Ol' Max, so we had to find a way to bring him back. What better way to beat all odds than to bring in the single most powerful magical power source in the comic?

That brings us to our next "problem," which is the Chaos Emeralds. They were gone now, dropped into the Zone of Silence to an unknown fate. That's how it seemed in the book at least, but I'd had this brewing for years. The discovery of the "new" Special Zone and the Seven Chaos Emeralds was waiting in the wings. Originally, the entire sequence with Feist was meant as a back-up story for this issue. In it, Tails and Knuckles were the ones to get the Grey Chaos Emerald and to discover the fate of lost Egg Grapes. We only got half of that in the end, but you never know when we'll find out the second half.

With the Acorn Family reunited it was time to move on to the Prowers. This, too, was a wayward story that found a home in this issue. In the very early pitch, the original story played as subplot to what would become "Leak."

In the original treatment, the two-part story would have Sonic and Fiona confronting the Destructix, disarming Dr. Finitevus's nukes, and setting up the heel-turn we see in STH#172. The subplot had Tails venturing to Argentum with Knuckles and Merlin and finding his parents. Ixis Naugus, however, would give chase and ultimately either the Guiding Star Gem or Merlin would end of being destroyed. This was all before "The Darkest Storm" had been finalized. Amazing what could have been, ne?

If I have any regrets over this story, it's that I didn't get all the time I wanted on Argentum. I wanted to show the conflict between the Xorda and the Black Arms with the rest of the inhabitants caught in the cross-fire. The idea was that only the Xorda had the power to resist the Black Arms and their efforts to protect the everyone (for a price, of course) ended up doing more harm than good. Amadeus and Rosemary would have to be found amid the wreckage of the Wheel World.

Instead, our heroes arrive practically on top of the Prowers. I tried to explain that away, as gently as possible, with Merlin's line to Tails about reaching out with his heart. It was Tails's love for and desire to be with his parents that zeroed in on them. The quick escape also didn't sit well with me, but what could be done? Retreat was the only option, and while it would have been nice to spend time saying as much, it ultimately wasn't necessary for the story to work.

Back on Mobius we get a taste of things to come. We have a the seeding of something that won't come fully into being until STH#178, a bitter-sweet remembrance with a touch of set-up for STH#172, and we have something that's resolved the very next issue. We'll deal with the latter in the next Script Bits!

Easter Eggs

- The Guiding Star Gem originally used Knuckles's "living Chaos Emerald" powers and was first seen in KTE#12
- The Special Zone shows signs of its incarnations in the games, namely the half-pipes of *Sonic the Hedgehog 2* and the checkered-planetoids of *Sonic the Hedgehog 3 & Knuckles.*
- Among the space battle you can see the Xorda attack cruisers from STH#125, plus the Black Arms saucers and the Black Comet from the *Shadow the Hedgehog* game.
- Why Sir Charles? Our dear Uncle Chuck invented the roboticizer; a device that can turn flesh to metal. Who better to recruit for a magical-gem-healing-thingie?
- There's a reason they get the Grey Chaos Emerald. Why? I can't get into that yet.

PAGE THREE

PANEL 1 - Largest panel of the page. We zoom out far enough to see the sphere SONIC and TAILS are standing on. SONIC and TAILS stagger and try to regain their balance. FEIST (see S#43) rises into the scene, just past the chest. FEIST's hand holds the sphere like a large apple. FEIST is impassive.

FEIST (large test, green balloon border)
. . . you shall be judged by Feist.

PANEL 2 - We look down on SONIC and TAILS. TAILS is terrified. SONIC stands protectively before TAILS.

TAILS
Sonic!
What is . . .?!

SONIC
I remember this dude from a long while back.*
Get ready to run, buddy.

FEIST (large test, green balloon border)
Fear not, for I judge in favor of thee.

EDITOR'S NOTE
*see the adventure way back in Sth#43!

PANEL 2 - FEIST holds the sphere up so he is eye-level with SONIC and TAILS. SONIC and TAILS relax some.

SONIC
. . . oh really?

FEIST (large test, green balloon border)
Yes, Truly.
On many occasions, I have seen you combat my former master, Ixis Naugus. And it was you, Chosen One, who sent the Chaos Emeralds into this Zone, giving me my power.

PANEL 3 - Big, wide panel. We see FEIST from the waist up. FEIST holds his hands apart. In FEIST's right hand (our left side), he holds the sphere. In FEIST's left hand (our right side), he holds out his open palm.
SPHERE - SONIC and TAILS wobble for balance
PALM - The SEVEN CHAOS EMERALDS appear in a ring (Colors: red, yellow, green, dark blue, cyan, purple, grey). There is a flash of light around the EMERALDS. FEIST looks down at the EMERALDS.

SONIC
Was that a good thing?

TAILS
Shh!

What happened to the Chaos Emeralds?

FEIST (large test, green balloon border)
I shaped their power and gave them form.
There are now SEVEN Chaos Emeralds.
With their power, I may shape and re-shape this place.
My Special Zone.

PAGE FOUR

PANEL 1 - On the Sphere. TAILS takes flight for the sake of stability. SONIC crouches on the surface to keep from spilling over. FEIST's face covers most of the background.

SONIC
Yeah, okay, so . . . can we have one?

FEIST (large test, green balloon border)
What?

TAILS
Mr. Feist, sir, we need a Chaos Emerald.

PANEL 2 - FEIST holds the sphere in both hands and peers down at the teeny-tiny SONIC and TAILS.

TAILS
The king . . .

SONIC
Former king.

TAILS
Right - -
He's really sick
And we think we can use a Chaos Emerald to help him heal.

PANEL 3 - On the Sphere. FEIST's finger pokes into the scene. The GREY CHAOS EMERALD appears in a flash of light. SONIC and TAILS stand on either side of the emerald.

FEIST (large test, green balloon border)
For your past efforts, I shall grant you this favor.

SONIC
Sweet!

TAILS
Thank you!

PANEL 4 - SONIC and TAILS head for the ring of stars/sparkles out of the Zone. FEIST holds the sphere up to the portal. SONIC and TAILS wave. FEIST is grim. Page-width panel and a fairly-distant shot to get FEIST's arm length.

FEIST (large test, green balloon border)
Know this -
I shall not grant another Chaos Emerald so easily.
Next time, you will be challenged as I see fit . . .

SONIC
Right! Got it! Bye!
(small text - and aside) Move it, Tails.

TAILS
Thanks again!

PANEL 5 - Brain Trust Lab. TAILS sprints from the room, CHAOS EMERALD tucked under his arm. SONIC yells at ROTOR, points behind himself, and runs close behind TAILS. ROTOR looks at them, confused. If you can, show the STAR POSTS and their diminishing portal.

ROTOR
You're back already?
Who were you talking to in th-

SONIC
Close the portal!
CLOSE THE PORTAL!

<u>PAGE EIGHT</u>

PANEL 1 - Everyone sits around the GREY CHAOS EMERALD and touches it with their fingertips. The GUIDING STAR GEM rests atop the emerald. MERLIN, TAILS and KNUCKLES close their eyes, lift their heads up and concentrate. SONIC looks over his shoulder, somewhat reticent.

MERLIN
Knuckles, guide the energies for us.
Tails, reach out with your heart and find them.
I will help keep us intact.
Sonic . . . hold on to something.

SONIC
Yeah, yeah.
I just wish I knew where Fiona was.
She might've enjoyed this.

PANEL 2 - Worm's-eye-view. We're on the ground, looking skyward at a dizzying angle. There is a flash of light - almost bonfire-like - that quickly tapers into a tendril at the top. The tendril coils and extends into the sky.

SFX (same color as the flash)
FWASH!

PANEL 3 - Mirror view/angle from the previous panel. There is an identical tendril/bonfire effect. The sky is night themed with an abundance of stars. There are also many XORDA SHIPS (see S#124) and BLACK ARMS SHIPS exchanging laser-fire.
NOTE: The BLACK ARMS SHIPS look like giant, three-armed starfish that are swirling like a galaxy.

SFX (same color as the flash)
FWASH!

PANEL 4 - SONIC, TAILS, KNUCKLES and MERLIN stand and look around in alarm. The once-super-advanced city has been reduced to rubble. It's barren and spooky. If you can fit in any sky, show more dueling XORDA SHIPS and BLACK ARMS SHIPS.

SONIC
Holy - -
This is **not** how I left this place!*****

KNUCKLES
What happened here?

TAILS (small text, large balloon)
. . . oh no . . .

EDITOR'S NOTE
*Sonic was last on Argentum in S#129

PANEL 5 - TAILS flies into the foreground/left, panic-stricken. MERLIN chases him down, alarmed. SONIC nudges KNUCKLES with his elbow and points to the sky.

TAILS (burst balloon)
MOM!!!

DAD!!!

MERLIN
Tails!
Wait!

SONIC
Ooooooooooh snap.
Knuckles, do you recognize those spaceships?

KNUCKLES
The Xorda.**

EDITOR'S NOTE
**Aliens that have tried to destroy Mobius - twice!

PAGE ELEVEN

PANEL 1 - CASTLE ACORN - MAIN HALL (see S#162). KING ELIAS (makes sure to include the crown) greets the Prowers with open arms. AMADEUS and ROSEMARY have been cleaned up and stand side-by-side. TAILS stands in front/between them. AMADEUS/ROSEMARY each have a hand on TAILS's shoulders, and TAILS holds their hands.

TEXT BOX
Later - At Castle Acorn . . .

KING ELIAS
General and Lady Prower!
On behalf of the Kingdom of Knothole, I welcome you home!

ROSEMARY
The pleasure is ours, your majesty.

PANEL 2 - The four walk down the halls of Castle Acorn. AMADEUS walks abreast with KING ELIAS. TAILS holds tight to ROSEMARY's hand and points to random things as they follow. Everyone is smiling and delighted.

AMADEUS
So much as changed since Rosemary and I were rescued by the Bem.

KING ELIAS

I will understand if it takes you and your wife some time to get adjusted, General Amadeus.

AMADEUS
Thank you, sire, but I doubt it will take long.
We're very encouraged to find Knothole has grown to be such a prosperous place
And that you have become king.

PANEL 3 - ELIAS and AMADEUS shake hands amiably.

ELIAS
You don't know how happy I am to hear such praise.
Will you consider joining my Court of Acorn and build an ever-better Knothole?

AMADEUS
There's no need to consider, sire.
I definitely want to be part of Knothole's future.

PANEL 4 - AMADEUS still holds ELIAS's hands. From the way the shadow's fall, we get a *slight* sense of foreboding about AMADEUS. Nothing outright *sinister,* but we should feel a little uncomfortable. ROSEMARY and TAILS beam at AMADEUS from the immediate background.

AMADEUS
Our time abroad has exposed me to many new and wonderful ideas.
I hope to share them with the **kingdom** soon.

PAGE TWELVE

PANEL 1 - Knothole Graveyard (see S#164). SONIC sits before/between the graves of SIR CONNERY and TOMMY TURTLE. A shadow falls over SIR CONNERY's grave, next to SONIC.

TEXT BOX
Meanwhile - The Knothole Cemetery

SONIC
There you are.
I've been looking for you all day, girl.

PANEL 2 - KNUCKLES sits next to SONIC. SONIC grins, sheepishly. KNUCKLES smirks.

KNUCKLES
Sorry to disappoint, true blue.

SONIC
Ah.
Well, it's what I've come to expect from you, rad red.

KNUCKLES
Still haven't seen Fiona?

SONIC
Nope.

PANEL 3 - SONIC and KNUCKLES grin at each other, challengingly, and spar with elbow-nudges.

KNUCKLES
I can see why.
This is a terrible spot for a date.

SONIC
Oh yeah?
Seems right up Julie-Su's alley.

KNUCKLES
You leave my girl out of this.

PANEL 4 - SONIC and KNUCKLES peer out over the cemetery. There aren't many graves, but there's at least two dozen.

KNUCKLES
Why **are** you out here?
It's not like you to be so morbid.

SONIC
I'm still hurtin' over Tommy and Sir Connery.
We don't usually lose so many so fast.

PANEL 5 - SONIC pats KNUCKLES on the shoulder. SONIC smiles, bitter-sweet. KNUCKLES looks haunted.

KNUCKLES
Right.
Like all my forefathers in the Brotherhood.*

SONIC
Them too.
And with the rise in the villain-count, things might get even worse.

EDITOR'S NOTE
*We found out they went missing in S#139

PAGE THIRTEEN

PANEL 1 - SONIC and KNUCKLES stand as the sun begins to set on them.

KNUCKLES
So what?
Are you going to quit because things are rough?

SONIC
No, I don't want folks saying I'm as weak as you.

KNUCKLES
Who are you calling **weak,** slowpoke?

SONIC
HA!

PANEL 2 - SONIC and KNUCKLES leaves the graveyard. SONIC gives a wave to TOMMY's tombstone.

SONIC
Catch ya on the flip side, Tommy.

KNUCKLES
We won't let their sacrifices be in vain, Sonic.
We'll beat Dr. Eggman.
We'll win this.

PANEL 3 - SONIC and KNUCKLES walk out through KNOTHOLE towards UNCLE CHUCK's restaurant (see S#154).

SONIC
I know, I know.

KNUCKLES
Besides, it's not like we don't have friends all over the world.

SONIC
Sure.
Although I wonder about one of them.

KNUCKLES
Who?

PANEL 4 - The skyline of NEW MEGAOPOLIS. The setting sun makes it look grungy and nasty - we know we're not in beautiful Knothole anymore. A single tower is especially high at center. We are to assume this is EGGMAN's citadel.

TEXT BOX (blue - Sonic)
Shadow.

TEXT BOX (red - Knuckles)
What about him?
He's in New Megaopolis with Dr. Eggman.

TEXT BOX (blue - Sonic)
Right, but I don't think he's really one of the bad guys.